

MATERNAL AND INFANT HEALTH

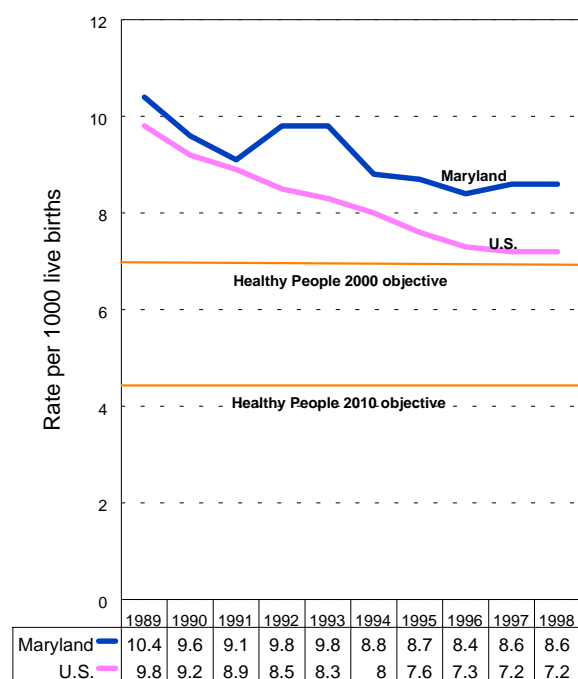
The Issue

The infant mortality rate (IMR) is a principal indicator of the health of mothers and their infants in our society. During the past decade, the IMR in Maryland has been consistently higher than that of the nation and the Healthy People goals.

The health of mothers and their infants is vitally important to our nation, as a reflection of the health of a large portion of our population and as an indicator of the health status of the next generation. Infant mortality, the death of an infant less than one year old, is an important measure of a nation's health, and also serves as a global indicator of health status and social well being. In 1995, the United States infant mortality rate placed it 25th among industrialized nations.

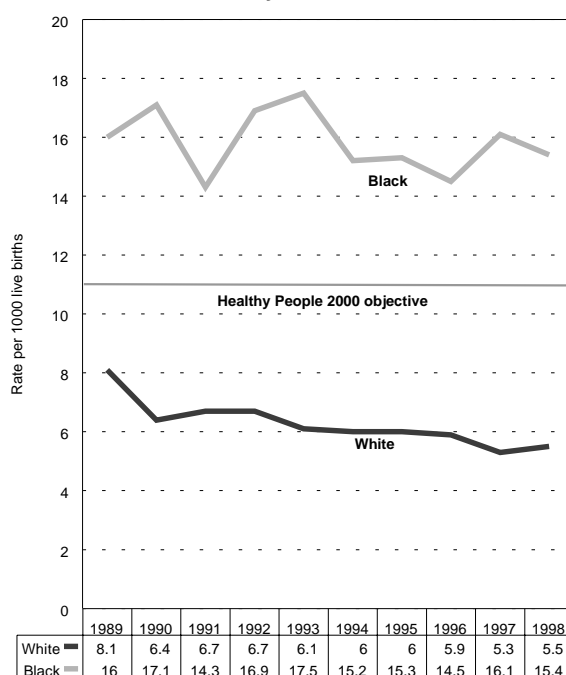
Five causes account for more than half of all infant deaths: birth defects, disorders associated with short gestation and unspecified low birth weight, sudden infant death syndrome, respiratory distress syndrome, and maternal complications of birth. Maternal age is also a risk factor for infant death. Mortality rates are highest for infants born to young teenagers (aged 16 years and under) and to mothers aged 44 years and older.

Infant Mortality Rate, Maryland and the United States, 1989-1998.



Source: Maryland Vital Statistics, 1998 Annual Report and National Vital Statistics System (NVSS), CDC, NCHNCHS, 1998.

Infant Mortality Rate by Race, Maryland, 1989-1998.



Source: Maryland Vital Statistics, 1998 Annual Report.

Over the past ten years, the infant mortality rate (IMR) in Maryland has generally declined, reaching an all time low of 8.4 deaths per 1,000 live births in 1996. Unfortunately, in 1997, the IMR did increase slightly to 8.6 deaths per 1,000 live births and remained there in 1998. The IMR in Maryland has consistently been higher than that of the United States. The 1998 Maryland IMR also falls short of the Healthy People 2000 goal of 7.0 infant deaths per 1,000 live births. The Healthy People 2010 goal calls for a reduction of infant deaths to 4.5 per 1,000, an even more far-reaching goal.

Topics, by jurisdiction, included in the Health Improvement Plan

Statewide - *Reducing Infant Mortality*

Charles County - *Maternal and Infant Mortality,*

Montgomery County - *Reducing African American Infant Mortality*

Prince George's County - *Reducing Infant Mortality in Prince George's County*

Priority focus in other jurisdictions

Maternal and infant health is included as a priority area for FY2000 in:

Anne Arundel County • Baltimore County • Dorchester County • St. Mary's County
Washington County • Wicomico County • Worcester County

Highlights of HIP strategies recommended to improve maternal and infant health

(for in-depth details, see the complete text of each state and county module)

- Reduce the infant mortality rates among the general and the African-American populations. **(State)**
- Reduce the incidence of low birth weight. **(State and Charles County)**
- Engage the community in reducing African-American infant mortality. **(Montgomery County)**
- Work with the Healthy Families Program to provide intensive support to first time mothers and with the Teen Pregnancy Home Visiting Program to educate teen mothers about the developmental needs of their children. **(Charles County)**
- Increase the proportion of all pregnant women who begin prenatal care in the first trimester of pregnancy. **(Charles and Prince George's Counties)**
- Determine the capacity among health care providers to provide culturally and linguistically competent pre-conception, prenatal, and post-natal care to the County's diverse populations. **(Prince George's County)**

Statewide Partners

Center for Maternal and Child Health, DHMH • Governor's Office for Children, Youth, and Families • Johns Hopkins University • Planned Parenthood of Maryland, Inc. • University of Maryland, Baltimore County